

far and in the wrong direction, changing Medicare from a reliable health care insurance for our seniors to a second-class health care system for Medicare recipients.

Under the Medicare plan, seniors will pay more and get less. The plan would allow doctors and hospitals to charge seniors above and beyond the established Medicare reimbursement rate. Balance-billing will bottom the norm as providers shift more cost to the seniors, the proposed cuts by the Republican Congress will show up as bills on the backs of the Medicare elderly who earn an average of \$10,000 or less yearly.

Perhaps even more damaging than the Medicare cuts are cuts and program changes planned for Medicaid. Under the Republican plan seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income families who receive help from Medicaid, would be at risk of losing their coverage. In addition, States will be allowed to reduce their own share of funding for Medicaid, making the actual cuts more severe than they first appear.

Two-thirds of all nursing home residents receive help from the Medicaid system to pay their nursing home bills. The Republican plan will allow States to target the assets of seniors' children to help pay nursing home bills, which average \$38,000 per year. Again, the plan is really nothing less than a form of cost-shifting.

The plan cuts Federal expenditures but does not limit consumer costs. In fact, these programs were put in place to permit families to take care of themselves when a health care crisis occur. Now, the changes being proposed would pull the plug on the 30-year commitment to Medicare and Medicaid.

Republicans have shown that they are indifferent to the elderly and willing to send the American working families and seniors the bill for tax breaks for the wealthy. But these are not responsible or fair priorities for our Nation's future. The American people expect shared sacrifice, not cuts for people programs and tax breaks for wealthier individuals, but there they go again, hoping that the bumper sticker slogan of a tax break will cover up the cuts of people programs.

Mr. Speaker, I urge the Members of this body to strongly oppose these proposals again as were proposed last year.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois [Mr. EWING] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. EWING addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

#### TRIBUTE TO ST. MARTHA'S STUDENTS—INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL CYBERFAIR 1996

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Michigan [Mr. CHRYSLER] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CHRYSLER. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the students of St. Martha's Elementary School of Okemos, MI. Mr. Speaker, the students of St. Martha's recently became one of the grand prize winners of the International School CyberFair, a global competition celebrating the ability of on-line communications to share and unite students throughout their communities, their nations, and indeed the world.

Placing second in their category, the third, fourth, and fifth grade students of St. Martha's created an Internet web site highlighting familiar treasures of the mid-Michigan area so that students throughout the world could explore their community.

In addition to creating their own web site, the students of St. Martha's incorporated links to numerous other Michigan attractions, such as Michigan State University, the University of Michigan, Lansing Community College, and the Michigan State Government Offices.

Mr. Speaker, in receiving this outstanding award, the students of St. Martha's are paving the way for advancement of technologies in our classroom. These students have not only demonstrated exceptional skill and determination in providing their communities with this tool of learning, but they have also become student ambassadors to the world.

As we have now passed the telecommunications bill and it has been signed into law this year, these students are on the cutting edge of the Information Age. As sure as we lived in the agricultural age in the 1800's, and moved on into the industrial age in the 1900's, we are now into the information age of the 21st century.

Between 1600 and 1960, human knowledge doubled. Between 1960 and 1980, human knowledge doubled again. And between 1980 and 1990, human knowledge doubled again. And between 1990 and 1995, it doubled again. And now about every 18 months to 2 years, human knowledge will double again.

The telecommunications bill will not only create 3.2 million new jobs, but it will also create a new America where 40 percent of the working people can work out of their homes.

That means that we will eliminate the traffic jams in the morning and in the evenings. We will stop polluting our air from the cars sitting in the traffic jams idling away. But more importantly, we will have mom or dad, or maybe mom and dad both, at home when these kids go to school and, just as importantly, when they come home from school, and we will start putting American families back together again.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the students and the faculty of St. Martha's in receiving this award. Additionally, I would like to recognize Cisco Systems and the MCI Corpora-

tion for sponsoring this global competition for their commitment to tomorrow's future leaders.

I would encourage my colleagues and citizens throughout the Nation to visit our mid-Michigan community via the web site created by the fine students at St. Martha's. The web site is located on the worldwide web at <http://cyberfair.gsn.org/stmartha>.

#### REPUBLICAN MEDICARE/MEDICAID PLANS ARE "CLUELESS"

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California [Ms. WOOLSEY] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank Representative PALLONE for organizing this special order tonight and for his outstanding leadership in protecting Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, colleagues, the Gingrich majority just can't keep its hands off of Medicare. For a second year in a row, the new majority is trying to pay for special interest tax breaks by forcing drastic cuts in Medicare.

After shutting the Government down twice, after seeing their approval ratings plummet to record-breaking lows, after the near collapse of their legislative agenda you would think they would learn.

Well, my friends, our colleagues on the other side of the aisle remain clueless. They remain clueless to the fact that the American people want no part of a scheme to make Medicare "Wither on the vine," as the Speaker suggested.

They remain clueless that seniors are not willing to pay more to receive less. The Republican budget cuts \$167 billion from Medicare over 6 years, which will mean drastically higher health care costs and fewer health care benefits for our Nation's seniors.

They remain clueless about forcing Americans into managed care programs without physician choice—the same programs which may force seniors to give up their trusted doctors. And the American people sure don't want to be gouged through excessive copayments, known as balanced billing, which is included in the Republican plan.

And Republicans remain clueless to the fact that the American people don't want their local hospitals closed because of a budget plan that cuts the Medicare Hospital Trust Fund by \$51 billion over 6 years.

Well, I am here, armed with messages from three of my constituents, to help members of the new majority get a clue. Hopefully our colleagues on the other side of the aisle are sitting in their offices, watching C-Span. I urge you to turn up the volume in your office, listen closely, and take note.

First, a 65-year-old man wrote me to say (and I quote): "I worked hard all of my life, raised ten kids, and fought in two wars to live my life in peace. Living on only 801 dollars a month, I need all the help I can get."